FARM AND GARDEN.

MATTERS OF INTEREST TO AGRICULTURISTS.

Some Up-to-Date Hints About Cultivation of the Soil and Yields Thereof—Horticulture, Viticulture and Floriculture.

BELOW WE GIVE an article from the pen of S. C. Gordon in the Ohio Farmer. It is of great importance, as scientists have asserted that moles live only on animal food. If this man be right, the mole is a public enemy. The article is as follows:

I read the article of Mr. Cranz, in regard to moles. In a late issue of The Ohio Farmer and am pretty certain that any farmer who has been growing corn, potatoes or sweet potatoes for a number of years cannot agree with him. From my own experience (and that of other farmers with whom I have conversed on the subject), I have found that where a mole-run is found in a sweet potato ridge, or in a potato hill, the potatoes have departed. Sometimes I have found them partly eaten, the surface still fresh.

In regard to corn, it is considered to be of little use to plant where it has been taken by moles, unless cultivation can commence immediately, and farmers frequently commence cultivation when they find the moles at work, before the corn is up, cultivating deep.

Some sixteen or seventeen years ago I had a field of corn badly injured by moles, in places nearly all gone, and in other places a pretty good stand. I knew it was of no use to put corn in the same places as I could not then commence plowing, and if I waited much longer the replant would do little good, so I got a boy to drop two grains of corn on each of the missing hills, and a couple of men and myself covered it by drawing dirt over the hill with a hoe; the result was a good field of corn. I did not see the moles take the corn, but wherever the run went through the hill the corn was missing and where there was no mole run the corn grew all right.

I once read in an agricultural paper of a man in New York, I believe, buying moles at five cents apiece to put into his ground to loosen the earth and I presume to catch grubs. I never heard the result of his experience—his theory was the same as that of Mr. Cranz. I expect when he undertook to put his theory into practice he changed his mind.

Some years ago I was hauling in corn from the shock; there was over a foot of snow with a hard crust on it; I took a hoe to loosen the butts of corn stalks; in the center of the last shock I found some half dozen cobs, still in the husks with no corn on them; I thought a rat had been at work, but the earth had not been worked up among the stalks, so I concluded it had been a rabbit. As I was cutting the tie stalk I saw what I took to be a rat among the blades, although it moved rather too slowly for one. I gave it a clip with the hoe, when, lo, and behold, it was a mole. That settled the matter, not only with the mole, but with me, that moles do eat corn. I went to the barn, unloaded my corn and put my team away, thinking about the New York man whose moles never bothered vegetation, and who bought up all he could, and thought that in the spring when the insectivorous mole was circulating in the agricultural papers I would give my experience.

But hold on—the fact isn't proven. You don't know that the mole did eat the corn; it's only circumstantial evidence. A rat might eat the corn and the mole just happened in after the mischief was done and it was getting late in the day, and turning much colder, and it was quite a distance from the barn, a deep snow with a heavy crust to tramp through, I was satisfied myself, but that didn't prove it. I sharpened my knife and waded back, cut the mole open and found its stomach filled with finely ground corn.

A neighbor told me that he had made a strong decoction of Mayapple root and soaked corn in it and put in their runs in the cornfield and thus killed them. He said the year before a man who had corn on his farm complained about a mole taking the corn in one particular place, that he tried the remedy at his suggestion and the next day or so after putting the corn in the run, he plowed out the dead mole. I have never tried it myself, however.

Growing Cranberries.

Last week we had something to say about cranberries and the soil on which they could be best grown. The soil best adapted to the growing of this fruit is a mixture of sand and muck. One way to obtain this desired soil is to haul onto the ground designed for cranberries large quantities of muck. After this has decomposed cover it with fine sand from the beach. In a few years the two will become incorporated, making a fine, black, sandy soil. On ground pre-eminently fitted for the growing of cranberies the soil rarely becomes dry except on the surface. Stagnant water is to be avoided, as it usually proves fatal. Running brooks in such a meadow are of value, but they must be under full control. The ground must be in such shape that it can be drained from one to two feet below the surface. The streams are to be used for winter flooding and summer irrigation. Some people advise planting vines upon uplands, but such locations are not advisable. True, the vines will sometimes live and bear, but it is an unusual state of affairs and should not be encouraged; for instance, writers on cranberry growing say that vines upon dry lands are short-lived, blossoms are blasted, and the fruit is dwarfed or badly worm eaten, the ravages of the fruit worm being greatest upon dry soils.

According to the opinions of some growers, soil heavily impregnated with oxide of iron should not be selected. Nearly all of our readers will readily recognize such soil by the "iron rust" that collects in the little stagnant pools. The main objection to such soil is that it freezes in a different manner from most other soils, the ice and frozen earth forming long crystals, and these latter have a tendency to throw out of the ground the little roots of the cranberry. It is true that such lands can be used, but they will need to be kept flooded in winter, and if by any reason the water becomes drawn off, a disaster may follow.

The same objection is urged against pure muck, as it will heave out the vines during the freezing and thawing process, if not covered by water or sand. One or two inches of sand over the muck will prevent this. Coarse or flakey mucks are also to be avoided, as they neither retain moisture, nor act as a capillary sponge to draw up water in dry seasons. Such soil can be used only with irrigation.

Preparing a Swamp.

First dig a draining ditch about two feet deep lengthwise of the swamp and wide enough to take all the storm water that comes. The next move is to remove the turf, which may be sometimes more easily done by first burning off the dry grass. After the turf has been removed, the branch drains may be dug. The distance apart of these drains will depend much upon the condition of the soil, but some place them at two rods apart. After this comes the plowing and sanding. As to the depth of sand everything will depend on the conditions. The depth must vary according to the depth of the muck and condition of the bottom, most sand being required on those meadows that have the deepest muck, for the reason that a layer of one or two inches of sand on a bed of deep, soft muck would settle down and be lost in the black mass underneath. Where the muck is six or eight feet deep the sand may be put on to the depth of five or six inches, but when only a foot or two in depth, two or three inches of sand will be sufficient. Summer, when the swamps are dry, is the proper season for preparing cranberry swamps.

More on this subject will appear in a subsequent issue.

Raising Turnips.

The turnip is a native growth of Asia, growing in a wild and uncultivated state in the woods. But centuries ago it attracted the attention of the farmer, and was appropriated, improved and cultivated, and used for food for both man and beast, and today it bears but slight resemblance to the original stock. In many parts of the world, and in both cold and temperate climates, it is extensively cultivated and used for feeding sheep and cattle, and also for the table, and I am thoroughly convinced that if farmers would give it more attention, and grow it more extensively than heretofore, it would prove to be quite a valuable crop.

When the soil and season are favorable the yield per acre is immense. From 300 to 500 bushels have been grown on a single acre, and at 20 or even 15 cents per bushel, they pay better than corn, wheat or tobacco.

The Swedish or rutabagas are considered the best for stock. To insure a crop for the approaching fall or winter the soil should be partially prepared in March or April. The soil should be fresh and rich as possible, and thoroughly broken and harrowed both ways and left until the season for sowing the seed. From the 1st to the 15th of July is the best time to sow. Then the soil should be broken the second time, and harrowed, and seed sown, provided there is sufficient moisture to bring them up. Last season I sowed on the 15th of July, and for three successive weeks the weather was extremely hot and droughty, and the crop a complete failure. The better way is to wait for moisture, even if it delays the sowing, for the seed are very tender and easily affected by drought. The quicker and more rapid the growth the more brittle and highly flavored the turnip, so much depends on the soil and season.

Drills are sometimes used for sowing, but I have generally sown broadcast by hand, and if they come too thick, which they often do, I thin out with the hoe. If early turnips are desired for marketing they should be sown in March or April, and in the garden, where they can be cultivated, which insures a quick growth.

There is another advantage in raising turnips that is generally overlooked by farmers; they are an excellent exterminator of the weeds and leave the soil in excellent condition for any other crop. Heavy, tough soils are not adapted to their growth. They are but little trouble to keep during the winter, as they are not seriously injured by a slight frost.—Journal of Agriculture.

The Christian Register prints the saying of a little girl whose doll's arm had come off, exposing the sawdust stuffing.

"You dear, good, obedient dolly. I knew I had told you to chew your food fine, but I didn't think you would chew it so fine as that."

To prevent drain pipes from stopping pour a hot solution of potash down every month.

With sheep, as with other stock, when everbody wants to sell nobody wants to buy.

Dogs as Beasts of Burden.

In this country the dog is, in nine cases out of ten, the master of the man, writes the Brussels correspondent of the Baltimore News. In continental Europe the reverse is the case, the dog there being too often the martyr of the man. In Belgium is this especially noticeable, for one of the first things that impresses the stranger in Brussels is the immense number of dogs employed in drawing barrows and small carts about the streets. In that city alone over ten thousand dogs are so engaged, and the total number of draught dogs in the whole country is probably not less than fifty thousand.

Generations of servitude have made the Belgian dog a race apart. For his size he is said to possess the greatest pulling power of any animal, four times his own weight being considered a load well within his power. Taking his average weight as half a hundred weight, this means that something like 5,000 tons are daily dragged about by canine labor in Belgium.

The economic importance of the Belgian dog and his inability to give effective expression to his own grievances, have caused the Royal Society for the Protection of Animals to undertake an agitation for the amelioration of his lot. It is urged that the animals are frequently overloaded and often cruelly treated, and that in many cases they are given no opportunity for resting when the cart or barrow is not actually in motion. Among the reforms demanded are (1) the abolition of the whip and severe penalties against the brutal practice of kicking tired-out dogs; (2) the raising of the minimum shoulder height for dogs of burden from twenty to twenty-two inches; (3) a penalty against drunkenness when in charge and against the employment of children as drivers, and (4) the compulsory arrangement of harness and shafts so as to permit the animals to lie down when the vehicle is at rest. Although there is no demand as yet by either the dogs or their biped friends for an eight-hour law, there can be no doubt that the adoption of these planks in the platform of canine emancipation will be hailed with gratitude throughout weary dogdom in the domain of King Leopold.

White Scours in Lambs.

The American Sheep Breeder says: One of the most prevalent diseases in young lambs is that commonly known as the white scours, a form of diarrhea due to indigestion of the ewes' milk, which is passed through the bowels with very little change. This is one of those common instances of the well-known fact that a young animal suffers from the disease of its dam, due to the milk conveying the disease by its unwholesome character. This trouble in the flock is mostly at a time when the ewes are turned on the grass for the first time, and the young and immature herbage has not sufficient nutriment in it, but too much water, and turns sour in the stomach of the ewe. Necessarily, this affects the milk, the poisonous matter passing off from the ewe in this way without affecting her in any marked way. And thus the lambs suffer while the dams escape. Prevention is always the safest in a flock, and to avoid long feeding on a rank growth of young grass, especially on a rich or moist soil, and a gradual change from dry feed to green grass, will always be a safeguard against this disorder, which if not quickly suppressed, will kill off the lambs in a few hours after they are taken with it.

Boiling Grain.

Did you ever try boiling grain for fattening fowls? It has long been the custom among poultrymen in France. The grain is put in a pan of water and boiled until soft enough to be easily bruised between the fingers. It is claimed that four pints of oats boiled will fill a pint measure seven times, four pints of barley boiled will fill a pint measure ten times, four pints of buckwheat boiled will fill a pint measure fourteen times, four pints of maize boiled will fill a pint measure fifteen times, four pints of wheat boiled will fill a pint measure ten times, and four pints of rye boiled will fill a pint measure fifteen times.

In this country poultrymen generally claim that there is no saving in boiling the food, notwithstanding the increase in bulk, as they say there seems to be a corresponding lessening of its sufficing properties; "that seven pints of boiled oats will be consumed in the same time and by the same number of fowls as four pints of the dry grain." But still we believe there is economy in feeding the boiled grain in fattening, as it has been proved beyond a doubt that the fowls will fatten more readily with the latter.—Ex.

Spruce Pulp.—The principal part of the cut of spruce on the Androscoggin River is now consumed by the pulp mills. Bangor lumbermen say the pulp mills of the Penobscot devour the equivalent of 50,000,000 feet spruce logs each year, with also new pulp mills in process of construction. Hon. Charles A. Milliken, mayor of Augusta, says the mills are using fifty millions of spruce each year on the Kennebec for pulp. About 25,000,000 feet spruce logs are converted into pulp on the Merrimack River in New Hampshire, while more than twice that amount is annually needed to supply the pulp and paper mills on the Connecticut River. Great is wood pulp.—Ex.

Treatment of Fruit Soil.—There are differences of opinion as to the methods of treating the soil in a fruit bearing orchard, but there should be no question but that the young orchard should have the most careful cultivation. Weeds and grass should not be allowed to grow, as they rob the ground of sustenance which should be absorbed only by the young and tender roots of the trees.—Ex.

Money in Some Deadheads.

A new branch of the lumber industry has been introduced on the Pike river, and before long will extend all over the Menominee and its tributaries, giving employment to hundreds of men. It is recovering "deadheads," or logs which are partly sunk and cannot be driven down stream. The water-soaked timber will be hauled out and put on the river bank to dry and then floated down stream to the mills in Marinette. Samuel and John Fitzgerald and John McDonald have organized the Deadhead Log company and begun work on the Pike river. They have obtained the consent of the various companies to operate and will be paid for each log recovered. There are millions of feet of timber sunk in the Menominee river and its tributaries.—Milwaukee Wisconsin.

The husband (seeing his wife off)—You must promise not to ask for money every time you write. The Wife—But that would necessitate my writing so much oftener.

"What's Jim a-going to do when he leaves college?" "Well, if he's got eddication enough he'll teach school, but if he hain't, I reckon he'll edit a newspaper."

"Do you consider Lifter strictly honest?" "Honest to a fault. Why, he told me without my asking that he stole that dog he had with him last evening."

Nell—Why did you marry that dried-up old millionaire? I wouldn't have him with all his money. Belle—But he said he would die for me.

He—You say they are both wealthy, and married quietly? She—Yes, you see it was simply a love affair.

"I conclude that's a fly," said a young trout. "You are right, my dear," said its mother, "but never jump at conclusions."

Friend—If you can't live happily with your husband, why don't you get a divorce from him? Unhappy Wife—I am afraid I couldn't get any one else.

Mrs. Hushmore—You'll have to settle up or leave. Summer Boarder—Thanks, awfully. The last place I was at they made me do both.

"I—I suppose," said the fair customer, hesitatingly, "you can warrant this hammock?" "Yes, ma'am," briskly replied the salesman. "It's built for two."

Husband—I'm sorry that burglar got your watch last night, my dear, but there's one thing to be thankful for. Wife—What's that? Husband—He didn't wake the baby.